

Case No. 8285/238**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

In re Application of:	)	
Maropis et al.	)	
Serial No. 09/417,266	)	Examiner: R. Foster
Filing Date: October 12, 1999	)	Group Art Unit No. 2645
For	)	
METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR	)	
PROVIDING PREPAID LOCAL	)	
TELEPHONE SERVICES	)	

**DECLARATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.131**

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

We hereby declare that:

1. We are the inventors of the subject matter claimed in the above-identified patent application.
2. Prior to August 1999, we conceived of the invention as described and claimed in the subject application as evidenced by the following:
3. Attached as Exhibit A is a relevant portion of our Invention Disclosure Form (dates and certain sections of text have been redacted in the attached) created and witnessed prior to August 1999 setting forth various aspects of our invention.

4. As shown in Exhibit A in the embodiment at, for example, pages marked 4 of 5 at "Database Review" to page 5 of 5, we describe how our invention for prepaid telephone services (referred to in the attached as prepaid dialtone or PPD) includes a method and apparatus for allowing subscribers to dial up to set up a prepaid account or renew an account for a fixed service period.

5. As explained in Exhibit A, our invention does not use a special switch that is connected for a duration of a call and monitoring each specific call. Instead, in one embodiment we use a separate PPD database that monitors the status of an account "daily (or as needed)" to see if the calendar period of service (e.g. monthly) has expired. (see page marked 1 of 1, section B; see also page marked 4 of 5, section entitled "Database Review").

6. The PPD database discussed in Exhibit A can provide a subscriber advanced warning that prepaid services are about to expire (See page marked 5 of 5, paragraphs 4 and 5), and can send instructions to a telephone network to either disconnect the service or place the service on a vacation hold where the account exists but is inactive.

7. As set forth in the attached Affidavit from the patent attorney we worked with, Kent Genin, we submit that we were diligent in continuing to work on our patent application from before August 1999 and through to October 12, 1999 when our application was filed. A copy of Mr. Genin's Affidavit is attached as Exhibit B.

I submit that all statements made herein are of my own knowledge and are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true, and further that these statements are made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States code, and that such willful statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued therefrom.

Respectfully submitted,

Samuel G. Maropis  
Samuel G. Maropis

10/19/04  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
John W. Moss

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
David D. Brezinski

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark J. Thabit

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Samuel G. Maropis

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

John W. Moss  
John W. Moss

Oct. 19, 2004  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
David D. Brezinski

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark J. Thabit

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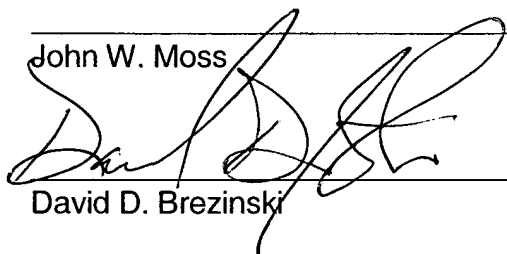
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Date

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David D. Brezinski

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark J. Thabit

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**Invention Disclosure Form**

1. What can we call your invention? (10 words or less)

PREPAID DIALtone (PPD)
2. Who do you think contributed to the conception of your invention?  
List yourself and the people who may be inventors. (Use additional sheets if necessary)

Sam MAROPIS

Name Printed

Current Ameritech Employee?

☒ Yes ☐ No

847-248-1616

Telephone Number

Sam Maropis

Signature

Product Management

Business Unit

847-248-3650

Fax Number

John Moss

Name Printed

Current Ameritech Employee?

☒ Yes ☐ No

847-248-5357

Telephone Number

John W. Moss

Signature

Product Management

Business Unit

847-248-3977

Fax Number

DAVID D. BIEZINSKI

Name Printed

Current Ameritech Employee?

☒ Yes ☐ No

847-248-5317

Telephone Number

D. Biezi

Signature

PRODUCT INTEGRATION & DELIVERY

Business Unit

630-289-0165 (CALL OFC.)

Fax Number

Mark Thabit

Name Printed

Current Ameritech Employee?

☒ Yes ☐ No

312 425 1170

Telephone Number

Mark Thabit

Signature

Product Management

Business Unit

312 425 1164

Fax Number

3. Who will be the point of contact for further confirmation?

Name: Sam MAROPIS

Telephone: 847-248-1616

4. What is your invention? Please attach additional sheets (as much as you feel is necessary) to describe your concepts - flow charts and/or block diagrams can be very helpful. In preparing this description, try to address the following:
- a) What have others done in the past (or, do now)?
  - b) What makes your invention new or different from what was done before?
  - c) What makes your invention better than what was done before?

See Attached Pages

5. Please complete the attached evaluation matrix.
6. Two witnesses (who are not inventors) must attest to the fact that they read and understand the attached description. The Witnesses must sign below and initial and date each page of the attached description.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Name

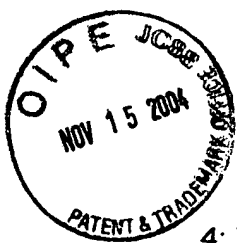
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Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Witness Name

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Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Invention Disclosure Form  
PrePaid Dialtone  
Attachment Sheet

4: What is your invention:

Please see marketing and product features on PPD sheet, and please see overall process flow of PPD.

A: What have others done in the past (or do now)?

Prepaid Dialtone (PPD) is a new product entering into the market place.

Currently there are three different approaches being applied in the market place:

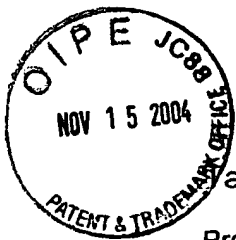
1: There are a number of patents that treat a ppd residence call flow the same way that a conventional long distance prepaid card works. That is, the LEC will forward all calls to a prepaid switch. The switch will do a lookup in the database and determine if that account, based on the incoming ANI, has a balance. The prepaid switch will then either route the call to either back to the local end office or route the call to IXC to complete the call. The prepaid switch will be up and monitoring and counting all calls. When the consumer hangs up, the switch updates it's database and drops the link between the residence phone and the terminated party's phone.

2: Companies will purchase or build conventional bill systems that treat a ppd customer as a regular teleco customer. The billing system will generate a bill, post deposits and order service from the LEC based on customer service input. I will forward a copy of marketing material of such software.

3: Companies will manually update a customer's record. When they find a customer who should no longer have service, they call the LEC and cancel service. This method is very manual and prone to errors.

B: What makes your invention new or different from what was done before?

The advantage of my approach to PPD involves the automatic system I have created to monitor daily (or as needed) an account to see if that account should still be current. If that account end date has been reached, the PPD database will automatically issue a order in network provisioning to either change the account from active to in-active or change the order to disconnect. The ability to manage an account using the established process of a prepaid LD product but to use it for account monitoring is new and different from what exists out in the market place.



PrePaid Dialtone  
Product and Feature Description  
Marketing and product features for PPD

### Target Market

Prepaid Dialtone (PPD) is a service to help consumers control their local phone expenses. The consumer will pay for the service through the use of a prepaid dialtone "card/package", purchased at either a local retail establishment or AIT payment center, and must pre-pay in advance of each following month.

PPD offers credit-challenged consumers a flat rate, week to week, month-to-month or some other fixed time frame period, prepaid billing arrangement. It is targeted toward customers who have difficulty managing and paying their phone bills. It is not designed for customers who qualify for the Lifeline product.

This product also provides a benefit to the segment of the consumer market that, due to poor payment history must provide a deposit in order to receive local phone service. By offering them an alternative to high up front costs and the risk of further credit problems, PPD provides an alternative method of payment that will appeal to the credit challenged and unbanked segments of the consumer market.

### Ordering/Provisioning

Target consumers communicating with Ameritech either at the business office, credit department or collections department will be introduced to PPD. If the consumer expresses interest in PPD, the service representative will transfer the caller to a sales channel that is focused on PPD. The PPD dedicated customer service center will be getting calls directly from those customers who hear about the Ameritech PPD product. Potential customers may have seen direct marketing material, an advertising campaign or seen a PPD card in their local retail store and choose to dialed directly the PPD customer service center 800 number.

Upon reaching the sales channel focused on PPD, the service representative will educate the caller on PrePaid Dialtone. After the service rep has determined what services the consumer would like and has given the consumer the price for this service, the service rep will give the caller an order number for the services just requested.

The service rep will tell the caller that they must now go to a retailer to purchase a PPD card. The service rep will look up a dealer location database and be able to tell the caller the closest retailer to the customer.

The consumer will go to a retailer and purchase a starter kit.

The consumer will then dial an 800 number listed on the starter kit. Through the VRU prompts, the consumer will be instructed to enter the order number.

If the order requires setting up a installation date then the caller will be transferred to customer service. Customer service will process the purchased card information, set up an appointment and give the caller their new phone number.

If there is no requirement to set up an appointment for installation, the VRU will directly process the order. The VRU will request the PIN from the back of the PrePaid Dialtone card enclosed in the starter kit. The VRU will confirm that the necessary dollars were transferred to the caller's account and that service will begin on a specific date (date subject to standard AIT terms).

If a caller has paid for installation and one-month service, prior to the end of the service month, the consumer must go back to a retailer and purchase a prepaid dialtone card/package for



## PrePaid Dialtone Product and Feature Description

ongoing regular service. The caller will then call an 800 number to transfer the card balance to their residence account from the card they just purchased. For ongoing month to month service, the PPD database will not have to do anything from a network ordering point of view. All the database will have to do is change internally within its database, the new end date of the service.

If the caller has not transferred a new PrePaid Dialtone card to their residence account by the end of the month, then the service would be put on a suspended basis using the network feature called vacation hold.

If after 30 days the consumer has not reactivated service, the PrePaid database will issue an order to cancel that residence service.

### Product Features

The feature set development of this product will be in two primary phases. Both are required for a successful long-term product launch. Phase 1 will be available on day one, estimated to be

There are two main types of accounts available for consumers at this time:

1. On-going monthly accounts. For the beginning of this program we are going to offer the following features:
  - Basic Linebacker
  - Voice mail 98
  - Dialtone features please see the specific order specifications, state specific, currently being developed on Attachment B.
2. On-hold account, called Vacation Hold.

### Specific Order Specifications

Phase 1 is being offered in Illinois, Ohio, Indiana and Michigan only.

Product offering in phase 1:

- \*Unlimited inbound calls .
- \* Allow 911 calling
- \* Allow 800/888/877 calling
- \*Basic LINE-BACKER
- \*Voice Mail 98 (2 USOC's)
- \*Directiery listing
- \*Custmer cycle 30 days
- UCOS's, FID's & Line class codes, as established at this time.
- \* Outgoing blocking and screening services
- \* International blocking USOC #RBVXC
- \* Toll Restriction TRS or TRS Zero Minus
- \* Toll Billing Exception TBE A
- \* 900/976 Call Blocking
- \* Call Control
- Prohibits International
- Prohibits 411
- Prohibits XXX-555-1212
- \*CIC M...

## **PrePaid Dialtone Product and Feature Description**

### **\*State specific options:**

- Ohio Unlimited local calling
- Indiana Unlimited local calling
- Michigan Call plan unlimited
- Illinois Call plan 400

### **Notes:**

- 1:) For MI, we will communicate to the customers that we are offering Call Limit 400. However, during Phase 1, we set up customers as Call Plan Unlimited, until phase 2 is operational.
- 2:) For Illinois we will communicate to the customers that we are offering call plan 400 and that when they reach local call 400 in Band A&B their local service will be blocked. Of course we will not be able to do correctly offer Call Limit 400 until phase 2.

Vacation service will be offered as a service to be used to put a non-pay customer on a suspend mode. When a customer has gone the 30 days and has not re-upped for the following month, we will place a change order in network for that customer's line to go to vacation service. In addition to vacation service, we will suspend one of the features of voice mail 98. That feature put on hold will be the forwarding features needed to make Voice mail 98 work. The mailbox will still be active and still holding the messages that were stored before the vacation hold was put on.

### **Phase 2:**

Phase 1 is for states that have a flat rate usage USOC. States like Ohio and Indiana have a flat rate local calling plan. Consumers in those states do not have to pay any usage, either per call or per minute for calls made in the local calling area. There are states such as Michigan that have both a flat rate usage USOC and a metered rate USOC. For Michigan, phase 1 will use the flat rate USOC.

**Description of the PPD Service Center:**

## **PrePaid Dialtone Product and Feature Description**

- Receive incoming calls and answer questions.
- Service rep looks up the address, confirms that the address is in area serviced by AIT PPD.
- Confirms if residence has had service. If new service, when caller has paid through either prepaid card/package at retailer or AIT payment center, rep will establish installation date. Give caller their new phone number.
- If residence has facilities, service rep will give installation date, after caller has purchased prepaid card/package and transferred card balance to their account. Give phone number.
- Order is not entered into an established AIT system, rather a dedicated PPD database.
- Explain to caller about going to the retailer/payment center each month before end of service date or service will be cut off.
- If caller needs to keep paying on old AIT account, then an additional amount is added to the monthly fee, base fee plus amount being applied to their old account.

### **Database review**

The prepaid dialtone database is a combination of the standard prepaid long distance type of database coupled with a unique twist specifically for dialtone customers. The standard prepaid LD database measures calls in one-second increments. Hence the need to keep up the circuit continually for the duration of the call.

My idea is to use the prepaid database engine type of account checking but to check the account for a fixed period of time, i.e. daily.

For example, if a caller has established new service March 26 with new service being installed on April 1, the service ends on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

On March 26<sup>th</sup> when the caller called into customer service, they had placed their order and were given an order number. The caller then went out to a retail establishment and purchased a prepaid dialtone card/package for new service with the correct amount of money. The caller then called back into customer service and gave the service rep the order number and the PIN from the starter kit. The service rep transferred the PIN number to the caller account. Then the service rep gave the caller their new phone number. The service rep then gave the caller a installation date of April 1 for new service.

The database determines that the order entered is complete, there is complete information in all key fields, the amount of money transferred from a card is the correct amount and the phone number has been given to the customer. The database will then electronically send the order directly to the ILEC for provisioning.

## **PrePaid Dialtone Product and Feature Description**

The order sent by the PPD will be specifically based on the order information that the service rep had entered into the system. Orders will be state specific and may be market specific.

The order issued by the prepaid database will be a new order for service with the limiting features as noted else where in this document and with linebacker and voice mail to round out the product offering.

Daily the PPD will monitor each account. For those accounts that have reached the end of their period, the database will issue vacation hold orders. For those accounts that have gone 30-days on vacation hold, the database will issue disconnect orders. For those accounts whose dates are approaching the end date, the database will create a file of all accounts in a specific range as developed by the marketing department. Currently we are thinking the dates will be five and less days till termination date.

Daily the PPD database will produce a complete list of ANI's that are within a certain number of days of the end of their service. This list will be sent to the voice mail vendor for further action. The file will list ANI's by the number of days remaining in the period.

The Voice-mail Company will then broadcast a message and leave it in each person's mailbox. The callers will hear the stutter dial telling them that they have a message. The message will tell the account holder that they have x days remaining and reminding them to go and purchase additional time from their local retailer.

For those customers who do add more time on their account by purchasing a new PPD card to continue service, the PPD database will update the account by transferring the new card PIN and transferring the monies to that account. Additionally, the database will extend the date of the end of service to the end of the new 30-day period. In our example that would be May 30<sup>th</sup>.

If however, the customer has not done anything on April 30<sup>th</sup>, the database will issue a change order in the network. That change order will change the account to a vacation hold specified in another part of this document. The customers phone number and voice mail box will stay the same during the vacation hold.


When the customer purchases another card, (they may need to purchase a card to cover a late fee of \$10) the database will accept the order and issue a new change order in provisioning. This change order will be the same as the first new order, activating all of the features needed to supply the service. The start date for the period will be the new activation date. If the customer dials into the VRU on May 5<sup>th</sup> and the service is to be turned on May 6<sup>th</sup>, then May 6<sup>th</sup> to June 4<sup>th</sup> constitutes their 30-day service.

If the customer does not re-up, then 30-days after the order to go to a vacation hold the database will issue a disconnect order with network. If the customer wants to re-establish service after the disconnect order has been given, they will have to pay for installation again and get a new phone number.

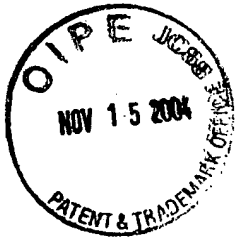


5. As can be seen, the attached billing summary is for our matter 8285/238 (seen under "client" and "matter" columns), our billing reference for the above-identified case. The attached billing report has been redacted to remove cost and detailed description information, but provides time and date information for the relevant period from immediately prior to August 1999 to the filing of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kent E. Genin  
Registration No. 37,834

10/18/2004  
Date



SEQUENCE NO.	INVOICE NO.	ATTY	TRANSACTION DATE	HOURS	CLIENT	MATTER DESCRIPTION
986977	128169	0389	07/13/1999	1.50	08285	00238
987191	128169	0389	07/14/1999	1.00	08285	00238
985830	128169	0389	07/15/1999	1.00	08285	00238
987416	128169	0389	07/16/1999	4.00	08285	00238
987193	128169	0389	07/18/1999	2.00	08285	00238
987412	128169	0389	07/23/1999	0.75	08285	00238
995346	128169	0389	08/04/1999	1.50	08285	00238
995373	128169	0389	08/05/1999	0.25	08285	00238
995034	128169	0389	08/06/1999	2.00	08285	00238
995009	128169	0389	08/09/1999	5.00	08285	00238
995125	128169	0389	08/11/1999	5.50	08285	00238
995359	128169	0389	08/12/1999	7.00	08285	00238
995036	128169	0389	08/13/1999	0.50	08285	00238
994918	128169	0389	08/16/1999	3.50	08285	00238
1000899	128169	0389	08/27/1999	0.25	08285	00238
1007365	130998	0389	09/01/1999	0.25	08285	00238
1007270	130998	0389	09/03/1999	1.50	08285	00238
1007191	130998	0389	09/14/1999	1.50	08285	00238
1007436	130998	0389	09/15/1999	0.50	08285	00238
1007047	130998	0389	09/16/1999	1.00	08285	00238
1009701	130998	0389	09/22/1999	1.00	08285	00238
1013837	130998	0389	09/27/1999	0.20	08285	00238
1014313	130998	0389	09/29/1999	1.00	08285	00238
1017946	130998	0389	10/01/1999	2.25	08285	00238
1018785	130998	0389	10/03/1999	4.00	08285	00238
1017644	130998	0389	10/04/1999	0.75	08285	00238
1017517	130998	0389	10/06/1999	0.25	08285	00238
1020453	130998	0389	10/11/1999	0.75	08285	00238
1020605	130998	0389	10/12/1999	2.20	08285	00238